

MONARCHS FOR A DAY

GERMAN PEASANTS WHO PLAY ROYAL ROLES ONCE A YEAR.

The Picturesque Trachtenfest of the Plattdeutsch That is Held Annually at Scheessel, in Prussia—Costumes and State Coaches.

Royalty in Europe is not confined to a few crowned heads. It is also to be seen in the humblest of subjects. In the course clad, coarse fed, ignorant, downtrodden peasant there smolders a spark of the imperial fire which at times bursts forth into flame. Yet these upheavals of his nature are not revolutionary. He does not then take up arms against the government. His insurrection is entirely peaceful. He simply dons a suit of fine clothes and struts about like some peacock just let out of a coop. And so throughout Europe there have been peasant festivals from time immemorial when for one day in the year the laborer believes himself a king.

An illustration of this regal side of the European peasant, and one that has become especially magnificent, is the Trachtenfest of the Plattdeutsch, or Low Germans. Each year it is held at Scheessel, Prussia, and there the natives of the country round congregate as if it were the court of some potentate. They come dressed in the gala apparel which is peculiar to their own communities, and some of them are attired in even greater splendor than may be seen at the palaces of certain all the year monarchs. Nearly all the costumes are family heirlooms, which have been handed down from parent to child, and for the reason that they are enriched each year by a little more velvet or gold lace they represent the wealth of long generations. Some are worth more than the houses in which their owners live.

Just as their hats and coats have descended from ancestral sources, so the songs and dances and all the other features of this peasant pageant hail from times remote. Scheessel is half-way between Hamburg and Bremen, and the American traveler who lands at either port can thus pass from modern to mediaeval times by only an hour's railroad ride. Should he arrive early on the morning of the fete day he would first see the triumphal procession. At the sound of a trumpet these one day "kings," with their "queens" and "princesses," parade the main street in a long procession, each community characterized by a different costume and each believing that its own is the most beautiful.

There is little attempt to adorn the "carriages of state," for their occupants feel that nothing else should detract from their own personal glory. They believe that their costumes are the chief attraction, and so it matters not that they ride in cumbersome farm wagons, used on other days for hay or cabbages and touched up for the occasion with a little paint or some loops of bunting. The dignity of the paraders, however, suffers not a little from the simplicity of their equipages, for, as the wagons have no springs, the "kings," "queens" and "princesses" frequently receive such jolts that they have to clutch one another to save themselves from falling.

Almost every wagon brings to view a different variety of dress. The women of Scheessel, for instance, are attired in great white aprons, the servile aspect of which contrasts rather ludicrously with their headdresses of artificial flowers and fruits, built up in the shape of a tiara. Around their waists are tied gorgeous ribbons of variegated colors. In another wagon girls from Vieland wear hats which look much like those their American sisters don when they are graduated at college. They are not quite so flat, however, as mortarboards and are more nearly like inverted soup plates. Their outlandish appearance is still further increased by two huge bows which protrude on either side from their back hair and which appear at a little distance like two fans of a windmill. In other wagon ride madchen from Elsdorf and Seifingen, Leer, Gottrum and Apensee and, most gorgeous of all, the Buckerburger lassies.

Some of the young women of Buckerburg deck themselves out in dresses estimated to cost \$250 apiece. So fantastic is the medley of colors to be seen in a single costume, so extravagant is the use of laces, braids, fringes, flowers and jewels, that it looks more like the sacred robe of some oriental priest than the bridal dress of a simple peasant girl. For it happens that a great many Plattdeutsch maidens postpone their weddings until just after the Trachtenfest, so that they may appear then in the costumes they are to be married in. Next year the dress will be worn by some other bride, and so on down the years.

A costume peculiarly grotesque is worn by the Stadthagen women, their headgear much resembling that worn by the "great tormentor" at the initiation of a certain American secret society. On their breasts they wear a shield the size of a saucer, and the edges of their aprons are elaborately with needlework, over which hundreds

of hands have toiled. Yet not all of the paraders are gay. Some of the Scheessel women wear the simple garb of communicants, with white yokes and white caps, and from Sitten comes a delegation which walks behind a wagon with heads bowed and in weeds of mourning.

In comparison with the women the men appear extremely plain. Their ostentation is limited chiefly to buttons, with which some of them fairly cover themselves and which vary in size from a pea to a butter dish. All the "kings" appear peculiarly stiff and awkward in their fine clothes, and even those who are wont to wear their costumes now and then on a Sunday instead of stowing them away for the rest of the year seem to feel uncomfortable restraint.

The music heard when the procession has ended and the various couples are "treading the mazes of the dance" would make one think that these people are akin to the Scotch highlanders. One dance is especially like the highland fling, and as a matter of fact it is called the "Klapper Scottish." The celebration generally ends with tableaux showing the peasants in the dairy, the harvest field or among the beehives.

Of recent years the Trachtenfest has grown in importance, drawing peasants to Scheessel each year from a much greater area and a far greater number of visitors also. The emperor, too, has taken a special interest in the festival, and not only does the empress offer each year a prize to the community which revives most faithfully the customs, songs and dances of its ancestors, but the Imperial example has led many wealthy families of the Plattdeutsch country to lend their patronage in various ways.—New York Tribune

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9:00a	7:55p	Lv Jacksonville Ar	9:00a	8:30p	7:45p	7:45p	Lv Jacksonville, Fla. So Ry Ar	8:50a	8:50a
11:40a	10:40p	Lv Jessup Ar	6:30a	5:40p	10:40p	10:30p	Lv Jessup, Ga. So Ry Ar	6:10a	6:10a
1:20p	12:15a	Lv Savannah Ar	4:30a	4:00p	4:00a	3:00a	Ar Mason, Ga. So Ry Lv	1:43a	1:30a
6:55p	6:00a	Ar Columbia Lv	1:15a	12:10p	6:30a	5:30a	Ar Atlanta, Ga. So Ry Lv	11:15p	10:30p
10:30p	9:55a	Ar Charlotte Lv	9:50p	8:33a	10:30a	7:30a	Ar Rome, Ga. So Ry Lv	9:05p	8:30p
11:30a	12:51p	Ar Greenb'r Lv	7:00p	5:53a	11:30a	8:50a	Ar Dalton, Ga. So Ry Lv	7:45p	4:10p
2:21a	2:10p	Ar Danville Lv	5:57p	4:34a	1:00p	9:45a	Ar Chattanooga, S R Lv	6:30p	3:00p
6:25a	6:45p	Ar Richmond Lv	12:30p	11:30p	7:45p	7:45p	Ar Cincinnati, O. Q & C Lv	8:30a	8:30a
4:34a	4:30p	Ar Lynchburg Lv	3:30p	2:30p	8:40p	8:40p	Ar Cincinnati, N.Y. Ar	7:10a	7:10a
6:15a	6:10p	Ar Charlotte Lv	1:40p	12:45a	7:10a	7:10a	Ar Chicago, Ill. Ar	8:30p	8:30p
9:10a	9:50p	Ar Washington Lv	10:51a	9:50p	8:30p	8:30p	Ar Cincinnati, Pa. Lv Ar	6:45a	6:45a
11:30a	11:35p	Ar Baltimore Lv	6:15a	5:22p	7:10a	7:10a	Ar Chicago, Pa. Lines Lv	8:30p	8:30p
1:45p	2:35a	Ar W. Phila Lv	3:35p	5:55p	8:40p	8:40p	Ar Cincinnati, CHAD Ar	7:40a	7:40a
4:15p	6:30a	Ar New York Lv	12:10a	3:25p	7:25a	7:25a	Ar Chicago, Monon R Lv	9:50p	9:50p

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Daily	Daily		Daily	Daily
Lv PM	Lv AM		Ar PM	Ar PM
8:00	8:00	Fairfield	2:30	2:30
8:10	8:10	Irvine	2:40	2:40
8:20	8:20	Dungannon	2:50	2:50
8:30	8:30	Southside	3:00	3:00
8:40	8:40	Hickman	3:10	3:10
8:50	8:50	Lake Blounton	3:20	3:20
9:00	9:00	Micanopy	3:30	3:30
9:10	9:10	Tacoma	3:40	3:40
9:20	9:20	Kirkwood	3:50	3:50
9:30	9:30	Clyatt	4:00	4:00
9:40	9:40	Wacahoota	4:10	4:10
9:50	9:50	Rocky Point	4:20	4:20
10:00	10:00	Gainesville	4:30	4:30
10:10	10:10	Bellamy	4:40	4:40
10:20	10:20	Cyril	4:50	4:50
10:30	10:30	Orsham	5:00	5:00
10:40	10:40	Hampson City	5:10	5:10
10:50	10:50	Palatka, G. S. & F.	5:20	5:20
11:00	11:00	Lake City, G. S. & F.	5:30	5:30
11:10	11:10	Tallahassee, G. S. & F.	5:40	5:40
11:20	11:20	Valdosta, G. S. & F.	5:50	5:50
11:30	11:30	Macon, G. S. & F.	6:00	6:00
11:40	11:40	Atlanta, C. of Ga.	6:10	6:10
Ar AM	Ar PM		Lv AM	Lv PM

* Trains 2 and 4 do not run between Gainesville and Fairfield on Sundays. L. E. BARKER, General Superintendent, J. F. HILL, Agent.

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